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Bible Shortage Reported in Yugoslavia

(Belgrade) - A serious shortage of Bibles is reported in Yugoslavia as the result of difficulties being experienced by the Belgrade office of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

Reports said the number of Bibles received by the Belgrade office has decreased considerably since 1957 when new government regulations restricted imports, and since then has never exceeded 500 to 1,000 copies per month. In the period between April and September of this year, at least 2,000 copies are believed to have been lost in transit from England and other shipments have arrived only after long delays.

The Yugoslav government is reported to have ordered an investigation and disclaims any responsibility for the situation. The Bible Society is the only supplier of Bible texts to Yugoslavia, where the printing of Scriptures has been forbidden since the war.

EPS, Geneva

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US Unitarians, Universalists to Merge

(Syracuse, N.Y.) - Representatives of the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America have officially approved a plan of merger, which if ratified will become effective in May, 1961.

Meeting in Syracuse, N.Y., they approved by large majorities plans for the establishment of the Unitarian Universalist Association. The new body will combine some 100,000 Unitarians and 75,000 Universalists.

In a last-minute action, the two groups also voted to continue their activities within the context of the Christian tradition. In a compromise constitutional amendment, they affirmed that the aim of the new body is "to cherish and spread the universal truths taught by the great prophets and teachers of humanity in every age and tradition, immemorially summarized in the Judeo-Christian heritage as love to God and love to man".

Delegates in an earlier joint session had defeated an amendment which would have defined the purpose as "to cherish and spread universal truths taught by Jesus and the other great teachers of humanity in every age..."

Neither Unitarians nor Universalists believe in Christ's divinity, but they accept his ethical teachings. Past general statements of both bodies have included references to Jesus.

In a separate session, the American Unitarian Association selected Dr. James R. Killian, Jr., of Wellesley Hills, Mass., as the nominee for moderator. The nomination is considered tantamount to election. Dr. Killian is chairman and former president of the corporation of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge. From 1957 to 1959 he served as President Eisenhower's special assistant for science and technology. EPS, Geneva

Roman Catholics Report Total 18.3% of World Population

(Cincinnati, Ohio) - Roman Catholics throughout the world totalled 527,643,000 last June 30, or 18.3 per cent of the population - an increase of one-tenth of one per cent, according to this year's World Mission Map, a publication of the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade.

The publication said the gain in the total number of Roman Catholics from mid-1958 to mid-1959 was over 17 million. The increase during the same period of world population was estimated at 88,976,000, making a new total of 2,886,691,000. This raised the Catholic percentage from 18.2 to 18.3 per cent.

The map revealed no new trends in increase of Roman Catholic population, but the regions of most rapid Catholic growth - chiefly West, Central, and East Africa, the African Islands, and North America, continued to show gains. In the two regions of heaviest total population - Eastern and South-Central Asia - Roman Catholic membership was listed at 0.5 and 1.3 per cent, respectively, approximately the same percentages of the total as listed in previous accounts. These two areas comprise slightly less than 47 per cent of the total world population. EPS, Geneva

Presbyterians to Study Overseas Missions

(New York) - A two-year study of missionary policy and inter-church work overseas will be conducted by the United Presbyterian Church in the USA.

A ten-man international team, comprising five members from the US and one each from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and Europe, will conduct the study.

Dr. C.H. Hwang, principal of Tainan Theological College, Taiwan, chairman of the study committee, commenting on the proposed study, said: "We can't help noticing in Asia and elsewhere that the missionary movement has been denominational. We are very grateful for missions, yet we cannot think of mission any more without thinking of unity."

EPS, Geneva

WSCF Urges Christian Contacts with Moslem Students

(Geneva) - Christian students have been challenged to take advantage of "a new openness" of Moslem students to outside contacts and to put themselves "at their service, trying humbly to help them to resolve their innumerable problems".

In a letter sent to its member movements in 70 countries, the World's Student Christian Federation urged Christian students to "be alive to every opportunity to create, maintain and multiply" relations with Moslem students. "We owe it to them", it added, "for we Christian students are one body with those Christians who are responsible for the upheaval of the world in which they find themselves."

The letter is based on a report made by a thirteen-member team which recently made a three-week tour under WSCF auspices to talk with Moslem students and student leaders in Tunisia and Morocco.

The letter said the team was convinced that there is a new readiness by Moslem students to respond to overtures of friendship from the non-Moslem world.

It described Moslem students as "experiencing in a unique way the radical transformation of our world. They are divided between the two almost irreconcilable worlds. On the one hand they are still asked to be faithful to their past as shaped by Islam, on the other hand the exigences of the modern life which have invaded their country force them to devote all their efforts to the search for new structures for their nation. It is no exaggeration to say that they live in a very painful situation."

The letter said Christian students have a duty to "have a share, no matter how small, in the effort of the Christian Church to serve in a disinterested way the Moslem world".

The team was led by Dr. Hendrik Kraemer, Dutch theologian and an authority on relationships between Christians and Moslems, and the Rev. Valdo Galland, WSCF associate general secretary. The team members came from France, Germany, Great Britain, Japan, Liberia, Madagascar, Mexico, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Uruguay and the United States, and included a member of the Russian Student Christian Movement from Outside Russia. They represented six denominations: Orthodox, Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, Methodist and Congregationalist.

EPS, Geneva

WCC Support Pledged to "Freedom From Hunger" Campaign

(Rome) - The "enthusiastic support" of the World Council of Churches has been pledged to the international "Freedom From Hunger Campaign" of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Dr. Egbert de Vries, of the Netherlands, told the FAO biennial conference convened here that the World Council will use "all the resources available" in support of the campaign, and that it looked forward to it with "hope and expectation" as a means of solving some of the world's food problems.

Dr. de Vries, who is director of the School of Social Studies at the Hague and a leading agricultural economist, spoke on behalf of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, a joint agency of the World Council and of the International Missionary Council. He listed four points which he said provide hope that the campaign will be successful:

"1. There is a growing conviction that any solution to the problems of hunger and dire poverty can only be found on the basis of world-wide solidarity between peoples and nations.

"2. The solution is primarily a matter of social justice, of a restoration of human dignity, of a redemptive force in a divided world.

"3. It appears clear that no progress is possible without active participation of those intended to benefit from the action.

"4. Purely technical recipes or general admonitions have utterly failed and there is now a new understanding that attention must be given to the concerns of ...families in their totality - their bodies, souls and the society they live in."

Dr. de Vries added that the gap between industrialized high income nations and largely agricultural low-income countries is growing wider, while at the same time the economically weakest nations, which are again the rural people, suffer most from market fluctuation. Only an international campaign can be the means of avoiding wasteful duplication and overlapping of efforts, he said.

The "Freedom From Hunger" campaign is scheduled to get underway in 1960 and will extend through 1965. It will be highlighted by a major World Food Congress scheduled in 1963 - the 20th anniversary year of the founding of FAO.

The World Council of Churches has announced that it will convene a world consultation of church specialists in the field "as soon as possible" to blue print plans for churches' participation in the campaign. It has authorized the appointment of an additional staff person to its Division of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees to organize the consultation and give full time to the campaign.

EPS, Geneva

Moscow Church Official Heads Israel Mission

(Jerusalem) - Archimandrite Augustin, formerly an official of the Moscow Patriarchate, has arrived in Jerusalem to take up a new post as head of the Russian Orthodox Mission in Israel. He succeeds Archimandrite Nicodim, who has joined the staff of the Moscow Patriarchate.

He will be formally installed in his new post at ceremonies in Trinity Cathedral following the return of Greek Orthodox Patriarch Benediktos of Jerusalem, who is now on a tour of Orthodox communities abroad, including a visit to the Ecumenical Patriarchate at Constantinople.

The Moscow Patriarchate has five members representing it at its Jerusalem headquarters at the present time. It was opened in 1847, was closed during the Second World War, and not re-opened until 1948 when the State of Israel was founded. It has jurisdiction over all the monasteries, convents, churches and places of worship which come under the Moscow Patriarchate. EPS, Geneva

Missouri Synod and NLC Plan Talks

(New York) - The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod has officially accepted an invitation from the National Lutheran Council (US) to participate in discussions of present and future cooperative activities in American Lutheranism. (See EPS Nos. 6 and 27).

Formal notification of the acceptance was made in a letter sent by Synod president Dr. John W. Behnken to Dr. Paul C. Empie, NLC executive director. The Missouri Synod with a membership of 2,228,000 members is the largest Lutheran body outside the eight-member council and has a conservative tradition in regard to cooperative activities.

Dr. Empie said the NLC and Missouri Synod officials have scheduled a meeting in Chicago on November 19 to work out details of time, place and agenda for the exploratory talks.

The Missouri Synod had earlier declined the invitation of the NLC to meet. It later reconsidered its rejection and wrote to the NLC that it was "willing and ready" to meet under "propitious circumstances" provided that "doctrinal discussions are primary on the agenda".

Dr. Empie is reported to have assured Dr. Behnken that doctrine would be discussed in the proposed meetings. EPS, Geneva


In Brief

Two Roman Catholic priests have been appointed to attend the National Conference of Australian Churches next February as observers. Their appointments followed an invitation issued by the Australian Council for the World Council of Churches. Official representatives will attend from twelve Australian denominational and church groups. Representatives of several other churches and societies are expected also to attend.

* *

The Rev. Kurt Schmidt-Clausen has been named assistant executive secretary of the Lutheran World Federation. The German pastor, who since 1955 has been serving a parish in Wunstorf, an industrial suburb of Hanover, Lower Saxony, will serve as assistant to LWF executive secretary Dr. Carl E. Lund-Quist. Mr. Schmidt-Clausen is chairman of the Commission for Ecumenical Studies and Activities of the Church of Hanover and a member of the Ecumenical Commission of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany.

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The weekly Sunday Protestant service over the Italian state-owned radio network is now being broadcast at 7.45 a.m. instead of 7.15 a.m. The half-hour change was made in response to requests by the Federal Council of Italian Evangelical Churches and by the only Protestant member of the Italian parliament that the country's only Protestant religious service be broadcast at a more favourable time.

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Protestants in the Munich area have been urged by the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Bavaria to help accommodate the thousands of out-of-town Roman Catholics expected to attend the 37th Eucharistic Congress to be held there next August. Church officials recalling similar assistance received from Roman Catholics during the 1959 Kirchentag (Church Day) held in the city said it is "a self-understood duty for us to exercise the same Christian hospitality".

* *

Member churches of the National Lutheran Council (US) have been called upon to raise an extra \$500,000 during the Lutheran World Action financial appeal for the World Refugee Year projects of the Lutheran World Federation. The 1959 LWA goal is \$3,900,000 of which NLC officials report a total of \$2,366,537 has been raised thus far this year.

* *

Membership in the American Baptist Convention reached a total of 1,555,460 last year, an increase of 8,233 over the year before, according to new figures released by the denomination's headquarters in New York. At the same time, the number of ABC congregations decreased by 117 to 6,245 (since 1946, the denomination has helped to establish 277 new churches). Sunday school enrolment rose to 1,028,630, an increase of 16,051 and member congregations contributed \$10,745,472 for the denomination's work and \$2,138,164 for other than Baptist Church benevolences.

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The first ecumenical study and retreat centre in Uruguay has been formally opened at a special ceremony at Colonia Valdense. Designed for use of the member churches of the Evangelical Church Federation of Uruguay, its facilities include a chapel and living accommodation for twenty persons. It will be operated by a special advisory commission composed of representatives of Federation member churches. President of the commission is Mrs. Yvonne Galland, a prominent Protestant leader, who financed construction of the centre. EPS, Geneva

NEW PICTURE SHEET OF REFUGEE CHILDREN

The picture sheet of refugee children enclosed with this issue of Ecumenical Press Service is sent you for display use in churches, schools and offices and to give you an idea of the types of pictures available from the WCC Department of Information to help you in publicizing World Refugee Year.

Additional copies may be ordered at a cost of Sw. Fr 10.00 (\$2.50 US, 18s. Sterling) per 100, plus mailing costs.

For churches and agencies in non-English speaking countries or others who may wish to print their own message, copies can also be made available without text.

All inquiries should be directed to John Taylor, Information, World Council of Churches, 17 route de Malagnou, Geneva, Switzerland. EPS, Geneva

